

**Agenda
City of Cocoa
Diamond Square Community Redevelopment
Agency Regular Meeting**

**December 15, 2025
6:00 PM
65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922**

I. CALL TO ORDER

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

1. Agenda: Regular Meeting of the Diamond Square CRA for December 15, 2025.
2. Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Diamond Square CRA for November 17, 2025.

III. DELEGATIONS

IV. PRESENTATIONS

V. ACTION ITEMS

1. Agency review of the 2024-2025 established Goals and Objectives and performance accomplishments as required by Florida Statute 189.0694. Agency review and approval of the 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives as established in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update 2025.

VI. ATTORNEY'S REPORT

VII. UPDATES AND STAFF REPORTS

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE - January 26, 2025 at 6:00 PM

IX. ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE TO PUBLIC:

This is a public meeting. All interested parties may attend. The facility wherein this meeting will be held is accessible to the physically handicapped. Please be advised that more than one member of the City Council may attend. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, the City hereby advises the public that: if a person decides to appeal any decision made by this board

with respect to any matter considered at its meeting or hearing, that person will need a record of the proceedings and for such purpose, affected persons may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, and such record shall include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for the introduction or admission into evidence of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals otherwise allowed by law. This agenda is posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and at the Central Brevard Library and Reference Center in Cocoa for public review.

DIAMOND SQUARE CRA AGENDA ITEM

Memo Date: 07/10/2025
Agenda Date: 12/15/2025
Prepared By: Peyton Fink, Redevelopment Coordinator
Through: Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director
Requested Action: Request Agency Approval of the Agenda from the Diamond Square CRA Regular Meeting on December 15, 2025, either as written or with amendments.

BACKGROUND:

Request Agency Approval of the Agenda from the Diamond Square CRA Regular Meeting on December 15, 2025, either as written or with amendments.

PRIORITY AREA CONNECTION:

Economic and Community Development

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

PREVIOUS ACTION:

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Request Agency Approval of the Agenda from the Diamond Square CRA Regular Meeting on December 15, 2025, either as written or with amendments.



DIAMOND SQUARE

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Tracy Moore
Chairperson

Crystal McQueen
Vice Chairperson

Larry Brown
Board Member
*(Appointed
by Brevard
County)

Brenda Fox
Board Member

Jackie Isom
Board Member

Angelia Smith
Board Member

DATE: Monday, December 15, 2025
TIME: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Council Chambers
City Hall
65 Stone Street

I. **CALL TO ORDER**
INVOCATION
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
ROLL CALL

II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

AGENDA: Regular Meeting of December 15, 2025
MINUTES: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 17, 2025

III. **DELEGATIONS**

IV. **PRESENTATIONS**

V. **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Agency review of the 2024-2025 established Goals and Objectives and performance accomplishments as required by Florida Statute 189.0694. Agency review and approval of the 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives as established in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update 2025.

VI. **ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

VII. **UPDATES AND STAFF REPORTS**

VIII. **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency is Monday, January 26, 2026, at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held at the Cocoa City Hall, Council Chambers, located at 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL 32922.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

NOTICE TO PUBLIC:

This is a public meeting. All interested parties may attend. The facility wherein this meeting will be held is accessible to the physically handicapped. Please be advised that more than one member of the City Council may attend. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, *Florida Statutes*, the City hereby advises the public that: if a person decides to appeal any decision made by this board with respect to any matter considered at its meeting or hearing, that person will need a record of the proceedings and for such purpose, affected persons may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, and such record shall include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for the introduction or admission into evidence of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals otherwise allowed by law. This agenda is posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and at the Central Brevard Library and Reference Center in Cocoa for public review.

DIAMOND SQUARE CRA AGENDA ITEM

Memo Date: 07/10/2025
Agenda Date: 12/15/2025
Prepared By: Peyton Fink, Redevelopment Coordinator
Through: Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director
Requested Action: Request Agency Approval of the Minutes from the Diamond Square CRA Regular Meeting on November 17, 2025, either as written or with amendments.

BACKGROUND:

Request Agency Approval of the Minutes from the Diamond Square CRA Regular Meeting on November 17, 2025, either as written or with amendments.

PRIORITY AREA CONNECTION:

Economic and Community Development

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

PREVIOUS ACTION:

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Request Agency Approval of the Minutes from the Diamond Square CRA Regular Meeting on November 17, 2025, either as written or with amendments.

**MINUTES
CITY OF COCOA
DIAMOND SQUARE CRA
REGULAR MEETING
November 17, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency was held on November 17, 2025, at the City of Cocoa, City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, as publicly noticed.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Invocation: Agency Member Fox provided the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Chairperson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL:

Tracy A. Moore	Chairperson
Crystal McQueen	Vice Chairperson
Larry Brown	Agency Member
Brenda Fox	Agency Member
Jackie Isom	Agency Member
Angelia Smith	Agency Member
Joseph Colombo	Agency Attorney
Peyton Fink	Recording Secretary

PRESENT:

Tracy A. Moore	Chairperson
Larry Brown	Agency Member
Brenda Fox	Agency Member
Jackie Isom	Agency Member
Joseph Colombo	Agency Attorney
Peyton Fink	Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Angelia Smith, Crystal McQueen.

STAFF PRESENT: Community Services Director Charlene Neuterman, Board Liaison Alex Goins.

II. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

AGENDA:

Agenda - Regular Meeting of November 17, 2025.

***MOTION by Agency Member FOX; SECONDED by Agency Member ISOM; to approve the Agenda for the Regular Meeting of November 17, 2025, either as written or with amendments.**

AYES: MOORE, BROWN, FOX, ISOM.

MOTION PASSED (4-0)

MINUTES:

Regular Meeting of October 20, 2025

***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member FOX to approve the Minutes for the Regular Meeting of October 20, 2025, either as written or with amendments .**

AYES: MOORE, BROWN, FOX, ISOM.

MOTION PASSED (4-0)

III. **Delegations:**

1. Anita Gibson shared concerns and challenges with her roof and the program she is in. There are several areas in Cocoa that she would like the Diamond Square CRA Board to keep an eye on. She asked for the boundary description of the Diamond Square CRA and Director Neuterman provided that information to her.

IV. **Presentations:**

1. The Alliance for Neighborhood Restoration will provide a short presentation that represents their programs and the youth participants in Fiscal Year 2025.
After the presentation was shown the floor was opened up for any questions. There were no questions, but the Chairperson did briefly discuss the sheet that had been handed out to the board members prior to the presentation. She then thanked Sonja for coming to the meeting.

V. **Action Items:**

1. Request Agency approval of the Diamond Square CRA Meeting Schedule for 2026.

Director Neuterman gave an overview of the action item and discussed the Diamond Square CRA dates for next year if approved. The board took a moment and reviewed the dates, and a motion was made to approve by Agency Member Brown which was seconded by Agency Member Fox.

***MOTION by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member FOX to approve the Diamond Square CRA Meeting Schedule for 2026.**

AYES: MOORE, BROWN, FOX, ISOM.

MOTION PASSED (4-0)

VI. **Attorney's Report:** None.

VII. **Updates and Staff Report:**

1. Director Neuterman shared with the board members that an election will be held in January 2026 for a new Chairperson. She further stated that agency members up for reappointment have been notified and are working with the Clerk's Office, and the reappointments will go before council.
2. We are still soliciting applications for the vacant position and once the City Clerk has received them, they will be brought forth for council approval. So far, the applicants have not been qualified to serve on the board.
3. Shauna Ginn from Housing Authority stated that her management company is having a hard time finding maintenance staff, they are looking for applicants. She listed various positions and stated that if anyone is interested then contact her. Her email is Sginn@hacfl.com.
4. Board Liaison Goins discussed signage in Pine Grove and Virginia Park. He suggested that this be on the priority list for the board to fund. He has spoken with a rep from City of Rockledge, as well as various employees from the City of Cocoa to get the process started. The goal is to get the City of Rockledge to help fund something, as the City of Cocoa and City of Rockledge share a median. He further stated that there are discussions to be had regarding signage as there are areas in Pine Grove that need to be improved on especially because there is no HOA in place for the upkeep. Director Neuterman added to the topic by stating that the plan will be to take existing signage and see how it can be improved. This will be done after finding a signage company to work with so we can see the best prices and options. Both of which will be brought back to the Agency Members. The Chairperson noted that improving the signage does fall within the Diamond Square CRA Plan.
5. Board Liaison Goins also stated that the Varr Avenue stop signs (which are solar) will be installed soon. He believes that this will help with traffic issues. He then discussed the enhancement responsibilities in the Lennar Homes contract and how he is requesting the fencing for the property near the Collins Museum be replaced with black raw iron. Director Neuterman also believes that this will be a nice enhancement to the subdivision and there are discussions about it. We will need quotes back which will be

brought to the board. Lennar Homes is also covering the costs for the expenses as of right now.

6. The Chairperson encouraged people from the community to give their input on what they want to see in the area and stated that the board needs to think about what they would like to do with the piece of land that has been acquired in Diamond Square.

VIII. **Next Meeting Date:**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the **Diamond Square Community Redevelopment Agency** will be on **Monday, December 15th**, at **6:00 pm** at the City of Cocoa, City Hall, 65 Stone Street, Cocoa, FL, unless a business need arises earlier.

IX. **Adjournment**

***MOTION to adjourn by Agency Member BROWN; SECONDED by Agency Member ISOM.**

AYES: MOORE, BROWN, FOX, ISOM.

MOTION PASSED (4-0)

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at 6:32 p.m.

Tracy Moore, Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted by:

Peyton Fink, Recording Secretary

DIAMOND SQUARE CRA AGENDA ITEM

Memo Date: 12/04/2025
Agenda Date: 12/15/2025
Prepared By: Peyton Fink, Redevelopment Coordinator
Through: Charlene Neuterman, Community Services Director
Requested Action: Agency approval of the 2024-2025 Accomplishments based on the Goals and Objectives set forth in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update of 2014 and required by Florida Statute 189.0694. Agency review of the 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives as established in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update 2025.

BACKGROUND:

In the 2024 Legislative session, Special District Accountability Performance Measures and Standards were created for all Special Districts in the State of Florida. Chapter 189, Section 0694 was created and states the following:

189.0694 Special districts; performance measures and standards.—

(1) Beginning October 1, 2024, or by the end of the first full fiscal year after its creation, whichever is later, each special district must establish goals and objectives for each program and activity undertaken by the district, as well as performance measures and standards to determine if the district's goals and objectives are being achieved.

(2) By December 1 of each year thereafter, each special district must publish an annual report on the district's website describing:

(a) The goals and objectives achieved by the district, as well as the performance measures and standards used by the district to make this determination.

(b) Any goals or objectives the district failed to achieve.

As part of the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update of 2014, specific goals and objectives were set forth by the Agency to accomplish on an annual basis. The following goals and objectives measured in this annual report are found in the previous Diamond Square CRA Plan Update of 2014 and each goal/objective shows the accomplishments achieved by the Agency during the previous year in **2024-2025**.

Diamond Square CRA 2024-2025 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Enhance SR 520 and Fiske Boulevard Landscape and Pedestrian Crossings

Objective 1.2 – Pedestrian Improvements - Improvements made by the City along Fiske Blvd. and SR 520 to improve pedestrian connectivity. City funded

Goal 2: Increase Partnerships with Habitat for Humanity and Cocoa Housing Authority

Objective 2.2 – Finance/Home Ownership Programs - CRA provided five (5) Down Payment

Assistance Programs to families in 2025

Goal 3: Create New Neighborhood Gateways

Objective 3.1 – Neighborhood Wayfinding and Historical/Cultural Significance - not completed

Objective 3.2 – Street Tree Planting - City made improvements throughout the district

Objective 3.3 – Sidewalk System Infill and Improvements - City made improvements throughout the district

Objective 3.4 – Stormwater and Infrastructure - City made improvements throughout the district

Objective 3.5 – Façade Grant Program - CRA awarded 3 Paint/Beautification grants to residential homeowners and one Commercial Façade grant to a local business.

Goal 4: Build New Joe Lee Smith Community Center/Park Upgrades

Objective 4.1 – Business Incubator - not completed

Objective 4.2 – Neighborhood Childcare Including Extended Hours - local businesses are accomplishing this objective.

Objective 4.3 – Programs Appropriate for Older Kids - Cocoa PAL and ANR funded by the CRA provides programs for older youth - 28 youth participating in 2025

Objective 4.4 – Job Training/Professional Skills Programs - ANR funded by the CRA provides job training to 5 youth

Goal 5: Broader Community Support for Emma Jewel Charter Academy - City and CRA partner to provide support

Objective 5.1 – Safe Routes to School/Trail System - City PD works with local schools in the district

Objective 5.2 – Partnership with Brevard Health Alliance (or Others) - not completed

Objective 5.3- Role Model and Mentoring Programs - Cocoa PAL and ANR funded by the CRA hold mentoring programs for up to 28 youth in 2025

Goal 6: Establish a Broad Based Organization - not completed.

Next year the Diamond Square CRA will review performance based on the new **2025-2026 Goals and Objectives** which were developed and approved by the Agency during the creation of the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update of 2025. These Goals and Objectives will be utilized to score the accomplishments of the Agency after the completion of the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year. The detailed Goals and Objectives are attached with a summary below of each Goal.

Objective 1 - Community Living

- Goal - Expand the Paint and Beautification Grant to award up to 5 grants per year
- Goal - Provide funding to one household for downpayment assistance
- Goal - Increase Code compliance by proactively patrolling neighborhoods

Objective 2 - Community Places

- Goal - Plant more street trees and expand urban greenery in areas throughout Diamond Square
- Goal - Enhance the parks in Diamond Square by contributing funds to support projects

Objective 3 - Community Connections

- Improve walkability by improving lighting conditions in areas around Diamond Square
- Upgrade busy bus stop facilities in Diamond Square along SR 520

Objective 4 - Community Identity

- Add signage in neighborhoods around Diamond Square (i.e.-Virginia Park)
- Host cleanup programs in the CRA
- Strengthen partnerships with Family Promise and Central Brevard Sharing Center to support services
- Increase the programming offerings for all age groups
- Provide health and wellness programming through events in the CRA

Objective 5 - Community Opportunity

- Increase opportunities for a small business incubator program that provides mentorship.
- Award a Commercial Facade grant at least 1 time a year

1. Community Living
2. Community Places
3. Community Connections
4. Community Identity.
5. Community Opportunity.

Staff requests approval of the 2024–2025 Accomplishments based on the Goals and Objectives set forth in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update of 2014 and required by Florida Statute 189.0694. **The relevant contents stated in this agenda item will constitute the Agency's Annual Report for the 2024-2025 year based on the goal and objectives of the prior CRA 2014 Plan, and has been placed on the Diamond Square CRA website as of December 1, 2025 as required.**

PRIORITY AREA CONNECTION:

Community Outreach and Engagement
Organizational Effectiveness

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

N/A

PREVIOUS ACTION:

N/A

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Agency approval of the 2024-2025 Accomplishments based on the Goals and Objectives set forth in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update of 2014 and required by Florida Statute 189.0694. Agency review of the 2025-2026 Goals and Objectives as established in the Diamond Square CRA Plan Update 2025.

The Florida Senate

2025 Florida Statutes

Title XIII PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Chapter 189 UNIFORM SPECIAL DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT Entire Chapter	SECTION 0694 Special districts; performance measures and standards.
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189.0694 Special districts; performance measures and standards. —

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History.—s. 7, ch. 2024-136.

Disclaimer: The information on this system is unverified. The journals or printed bills of the respective chambers should be consulted for official purposes.

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3.0 Redevelopment Goals and Objectives

Strategic investments in Diamond Square will provide the foundation for the implementation of the community's vision. It will be essential to further establish the critical mass of development and adjacent employment, residential life, and recreational venues in and related to the CRA district. The following plan elements are a compilation of the goals and priorities for the Diamond Square CRA District. The goals listed below are the transformational initiatives, while the objectives are incremental initiatives. Just as the transformational goals fall under more than one strategic framework category, the incremental objectives can apply to more than one goal, but have been placed under the goal to which they are most related.

Goal 1: Enhance Streetscapes and Pedestrian Connectivity

Objective 1.1 – State Road 520

State Road 520 is a 34 mile east-west state highway that runs from SR 50 in east Orange County to A1A in Cocoa Beach. In Cocoa, SR 520 is known as King Street. The aesthetic quality of a streetscape design in Diamond Square is severely lacking on many roads and thoroughfares, including SR 520. However, a limited portion of SR 520 recently received a landscape grant from FDOT that was augmented with City funds to help the road be both more aesthetically pleasing and. Enhanced pedestrian connectivity could be improved throughout the Diamond Square area. Widen sidewalks and the construction of new sidewalks where none exist could provide a buffer between the busy lanes of traffic. There is no apparent public signage for automobiles or pedestrians, other than standard regulatory signs. Additional signage types including storefront signage, public wayfinding and regulatory signage could not only serve a navigational purpose, but can also help create a “sense of place” in the community.



Recent SR 520 Landscape Enhancements

Possible Intersection Enhancements (below)



Objective 1.2 –Peachtree Street Complete Street

Currently a Complete Street design is underway, and is through the 60% design stage for Peachtree Street. The Complete Street design includes sidewalks, curbing, landscaping and a bicycle lane. With funding from the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization and the City of Cocoa, it is anticipated the Project will commence in 2015.

Objective 1.3 – 5-Points Realignment and Pedestrian Improvements

The intersection of SR 520, Varr Avenue, and Lake Drive is located near the western boundary of the CRA district and is referred to as “5-Points.” Due to the convergence of the three roads, a five way intersection is created that makes for a dangerous traffic pattern for both automobiles and pedestrians. The intersection needs realignment and pedestrian improvements to increase safety and flow of traffic. Pedestrian improvements include better signage and traffic signals, decorative elements, and improved sidewalks.

Objective 1.4- South Fiske Boulevard Landscaping and Mid-Block Crossing

The City sought, and was awarded a Corridor Study to be conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation which will assess vehicular and pedestrian traffic on this particular stretch of Fiske Boulevard. It is anticipated that some of the recommendations will include curbs, gutters, landscaping, and appropriate signage. A particular emphasis should be the accommodation of a safety crosswalk.

The distance on S Fiske between King Street (SR 520) and Rosa L Jones Drive is a little more than four tenths of a mile. This is anywhere from double to four times the length of an average city block. In other words, it is too far for pedestrians to walk to find a crosswalk, and therefore they are crossing unsafely in the middle of S Fiske. An ideal spot for a mid-block crossing

would be near the commercial development on the west side of Fiske Boulevard at or around Holmes Street where many pedestrians already cross without the help of a crosswalk.



Fiske Boulevard Possible Enhancements

Objective 1.5 – Transportation Terminus

Due to the income status of the majority of the Diamond Square residents, it is imperative that public transportation is readily available to the community. The availability of buses, such as Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT), will allow for access to educational opportunities, medical care, employment, and shopping. The location of a SCAT terminus in the CRA would facilitate this access and will promote even greater access.

Goal 2: Increase Partnerships with Housing Developers



Current Curb Appeal

Possible Enhancements



Cocoa has a unique situation occurring in the current real estate market which severely discourages any new residential development. The cost of construction is currently higher than the value of the new home once it is built. Due to this unique situation, housing developers are unable to construct new homes in the Diamond Square CRA without selling for a loss. However, Habitat for Humanity of Brevard County Inc., Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) or other such not for profit housing developers are able to build new residential units in Diamond Square with various housing programs support and without a loss. For this reason, additional financing mechanisms, such as housing grants, tax credits, bonds, and fee waivers, should continue to be sought to assist housing developers to be partners in the Diamond Square redevelopment efforts.

In July 1994, the City adopted a SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan that put into place expedited permitting policies and procedures to ensure that affordable housing projects receive priority processing. On February 14, 2006, City Council adopted Resolution No. 2006-20 waiving building permits and inspection fees for City projects or projects completed on City property. Other incentives include requests for a reduction of parking and/or setback requirements for affordable housing which are reviewed by the city staff and the appropriate board (Planning & Zoning, Board of Adjustment) and/or City Council. Any reductions will be allowed on a case by case basis if appropriate through development agreements. Development agreements must be approved by City Council.

Since 2007, the City has entered into three (3) affordable housing development agreements for setback reductions within the Diamond Square CRA, two (2) with Habitat for Humanity of Brevard County, Inc. (Habitat) and Central Florida Community Development Corporation (CFCDC). The reduction in setback requirements allowed Habitat to build three (3) homes on land zoned only for two (2) and allowed CFCDC to build eight (8) homes on land zoned only for four (4). Unfortunately, due to market conditions, CFCDC was not able to complete the Regina Myra Subdivision.

The Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa (HACoC) is also a valuable partner due to the amount of undeveloped parcels they own within the Diamond Square CRA. No new construction has occurred since July 2010, when the HACoC experienced major financial difficulties and the effects of a downturn in the economy. A cooperative partnership between the CRA and the Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa (HACoC) would serve to provide additional residential housing units for homeownership opportunities on their existing vacant lots.

Objective 2.1 – Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa Curb Appeal

The HACoC was established in 1953 with the construction of Barlow Homes and the Peter Young Complex. In 1961-65, three (3) additional projects were added; Peachtree Manor, Brockington Home, and the Pineda Homes/Moore Homes Complex. The existing properties owned by the Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa are in need of maintenance and/or replacing. However, additional improvements are needed on the HACoC's public housing units such as central air conditioning, upgrades to windows as well as the facades. Finally, the neighborhoods on which the HACoC properties are located could be enhanced through beautification efforts. Moreover, trees or foliage could soften the appearance and provide a sense of community for residents. Finally, street names should be evaluated within the City and County processes and renamed to honor local residents and dignitaries who have made efforts to enhance and renew the Diamond Square Redevelopment Area.

Objective 2.2 – Finance/Home Ownership Programs

In addition to escalating construction costs, the current economic climate has made the securing of mortgages for housing more difficult to attain. Lenders are requiring higher credit scores and more stringent terms. Also, with a large percentage of the population unemployed or underemployed, the ability to afford decent housing has further declined. Although the cost of housing has decreased over the past several years and foreclosures and short sales have increased, the ability for much of the population to secure housing has been limited.

With lower than average income in the Diamond Square area, affordable housing is consistently an issue among residents. There are some programs in place to assist with homeownership, but these programs target those who have the lowest household income and tend to exclude those who may have a little higher household income but are still struggling to pay their basic expenses. Housing programs should be reexamined in order to ensure the most benefit to residents and the community.

Goal 3: Create Neighborhood Gateways



Current Roadway at Washington St. / Rosa L. Jones St. and Possible Entryway Design



The intersection of Stone Street and Washington Street is the African-American historical hub of Diamond Square and the City of Cocoa. It is important to address gateways into Diamond Square by creating signs, banners, or other markers that acknowledge the past but embrace the future. This may entail the purchase of additional property between Stone Street and SR 520 (currently used for outdoor storage) that could be used to incorporate a completely new entryway design. In addition, streetscaping techniques and historical markers can be used to create a feeling of new beginnings while still remembering the history of the corridor. As part of the overall Stone Street makeover, a redesign of the railroad terminus area to accommodate outdoor events and activities such as farmer's markets, musical events, and festivals would serve to rejuvenate the area.

Objective 3.1 – Neighborhood Entry Signage and Historical/Cultural Significance

The recommendations for the signage system are intended to supplement the City's existing codes relating to the design and placement of signs. Given that Diamond Square's historical Stone Street area is somewhat hidden from the main thoroughfare of SR 520 and the popular

Cocoa Village district, an entryway and/or signage are needed to give the area some prominence and visibility in the community.

Supporting historic preservation is an important part of establishing a linkage to the past and creating an identity for the area to which people can relate. Maintaining historic ties to the community's civic, social, agricultural and maritime past allows residents and visitors to reflect on how the area has grown over time and take pride in their heritage. Linking the various sites and points of interest in the different CRAs can create an attractive "historical trail" to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Connecting historic elements through physical preservation, new design, arts and cultural programs, as well as festivals and special events is an additional way in which Cocoa and Diamond Square's image of an enjoyable place to live, work, and play is reinforced.

Objective 3.2 – Encourage Mixed Use Development on Stone Street

Developing a new gateway entrance to the neighborhood at Stone Street and Washington Street off of SR 520 provides a renewed opportunity to encourage mixed use developments along the corridor. Fronting Washington and Stone Street, the possibility may exist for a mix of retail, food services, residential and neighborhood services, as well as special place for farmers market and other public event type activities. Establishing certain design guidelines and land use policies should create a quality space for all to enjoy.

Objective 3.3 – Street Tree Planting

Trees make the City more livable, improve the environment, enhance public health and are one of the most beneficial and cost effective ways to support and advance our infrastructure. Street trees are not only practical in that they provide shade for pedestrians, but they also have aesthetic benefit when properly used. The Diamond Square CRA and specifically along historic Stone Street, could benefit from an enhanced street tree planting and decorative lighting initiative.

Street trees and decorative lighting along streets in which public housing is predominately located could transform the current neighborhoods into a walkable place where people are proud to live and play. A tree-planting initiative with local sponsors can be a means of engaging the residents and community at large in a cost-effective beautification event.

Objective 3.4 – Sidewalk System Infill and Improvements

Sidewalks are the building blocks of an effective pedestrian network. "Walkable" neighborhoods often have higher property values because homes in locations where residents can safely walk to schools and nearby destinations are desirable. In an effort to provide a safe, enjoyable and walkable environment for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized users, the Diamond Square CRA should evaluate the current sidewalk system and make improvements for sidewalks, trails, road crossing, and neighborhood connector routes.

Benefits of properly designed sidewalks and connectivity include: Improved pedestrian safety; improved safety for motorists (not worrying about hitting a pedestrian so they have a head on collision with a car); improved sociability and neighborliness; improved air quality from decreased usage of vehicles; improved family budgets because of being able to safely walk on short trips rather than driving (25% of vehicle trips are less than 1 mile); and improved health.

Objective 3.5 – Stormwater and Infrastructure

Stormwater and drainage are always constraints to development in Florida, but are necessary to prevent flooding. One of the accomplishments already made by the CRA since 1998 has been the clearing of the old Skyview Trailer Park site which the CRA acquired and then assisted the City and County with the installation of a stormwater pond and a half of a million dollars in stormwater and drainage improvements throughout Diamond Square CRA. The CRA has also provided funding for the Diamond Square Drainage Study. This initiative led the City to be eligible to receive a \$374,000 grant from Brevard County to complete the improvements and assisted the City with stormwater improvements on Catherine Court and Donley Street using City Community Development Block Grant funds.

Objective 3.6 – Façade Grant Program

The CRA has also made façade/signage renovations through grants. This is an effort that raises the value and perception of an area and can help encourage area spending and investment. Though Diamond Square is an area recognized for its historical past, new façade renovations may bring the area up to date and give it a new life meeting more contemporary standards.

Goal 4: Explore the Feasibility of Creating New Community-Based Centers



Possible Location for a New Community Center at Stone and Washington Intersection

New Community Center Concept Plan at Stone and Washington



Objective 4.1 – Joe Lee Smith Center Upgrades and/or Reconstruction

The existing Joe Lee Smith Center is outdated and lacks the space required for the type of services that have been identified as needed in the neighborhood. A significantly upgraded facility or a new community center would serve many purposes for the Diamond Square community. If a new center were to be built, it could be located at the corner of Stone Street and Washington Street, and serve as a destination anchor for a revitalized Stone Street. The center would make a statement of growth and stability in the historical corridor of Stone Street in Diamond Square. The Stone Street area is a focal point in the minds of many community members due to its significance as a once thriving commercial road, full of successful businesses with black owners. In addition to its community significance, the location for the community center was chosen for its proximity to the surrounding neighborhood and ease of access for children by foot or bike. It will also serve as an easily identifiable focal point for the reconfigured entryway off of King Street (SR 520).

The existing Joe Lee Smith Recreation Center was built in 1963 and is 5,992 square feet. It includes one indoor and one outdoor basketball court, as well as an outdoor pool and indoor meeting space only large enough for about fifteen people. The center is in disrepair, and despite the frequency of its use, does not meet the standards for what the community needs. The existing facility is owned by the City of Cocoa and operated by Brevard County. Significantly upgrading the facility or building a new community center will take strong support from local partners, and the County should be looked to when finding an operational partner. The size would be dependent on what resources the community and CRA can leverage. The center would be a gathering hub for community activities such as meetings, fairs, sports, afterschool programs, job training workshops, healthcare services and many other uses.

In addition to the Joe L Smith Recreation Center, the Harry T. Moore Center is also located in the Diamond Square Area and has recently been acquired by the City of Cocoa. Originally constructed in 1924, the Moore Center was the first black school in Cocoa and served as the original black high school until a new facility was constructed in 1954. At that time, the school was renamed the Harry T. Moore Center and it continued to serve as a community center with on-site day care. The City, along with the Diamond Square CRA, can encourage use of the

facility as a historic local museum as well as a meeting facility for local non-profits and other community organizations.

Objective 4.2 – Business Incubator

An Incubator Program lends support to start-up businesses for the successful development of entrepreneurial skills through resources and services. An Incubator can include space for private offices, internet and telephone and shared common areas for a nominal monthly fee. Through an Incubator Program, local small business owners can learn the skills necessary to successfully operate their business while maintaining low operating costs in their initial stages. In addition, local business owners can serve as mentors and business experts to assist incubator businesses with their operations and provide guidance on operational and financial issues. The incubator businesses can then move on to more traditional operational structures upon graduation from the Business Incubator.

Objective 4.3 – Neighborhood Childcare Including Extended Hours

Competent childcare is an important part of strengthening Diamond Square. With reliable, easily accessible and affordable extended hour childcare, caretakers would have more flexibility in their work hours. Childcare facilities within Diamond Square, in close proximity to where residents live would be a benefit to parents who work, making it easier to drop-off and pick-up their children.

Objective 4.4 – Programs and Partners for Kids

A community center, or similar facility, is a wonderful place for tweens (preadolescents) and teens to gather and stay active. Programs such as movie nights, spoken word sessions, various craft activities, cooking lessons, book clubs, brain challenges, etc. could be led by community partners and enjoyed by the youth. Partners such as the Alliance for Neighborhood Restoration, the Police Athletic League, the Brevard County Parks and Recreation Department, and others can sponsor a variety of such programs. These programs would be encouraged and expanded.

Objective 4.5 – Job Training/Professional Skills Programs

While the local economy has seen an uptake in employment recently, job training and professional skills development will continue to be needed in the new economy. Local employers, Workforce Brevard and training offered by Eastern Florida State College could assist Diamond Square residents in enhancing their skills and possibly provide industry certifications. Such training programs could be housed centrally and provide training at a low or no cost to residents.

Objective 4.6 – Health Clinic

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the Diamond Square Area has extreme and pervasive levels of poverty (38.8%) and unemployment (11.8%) with 42.6% of the residents not in the labor force. In addition, the Center for Disease Control reported in 2011, those living in extreme poverty are at an increased risk for mortality, morbidity, unhealthy behaviors, reduced access to health care and inadequate care.

Many Diamond Square residents are unable to conveniently access adequate health care due to a lack of transportation or the unavailability of a local provider. The nearest urgent care clinics are in Merritt Island and Rockledge, while the nearest pediatric clinic and hospital are in Rockledge. A federally-qualified health care facility would improve access for local residents

and also provide ancillary services for all ages at affordable rates. A partnership with the Brevard Health Alliance or a similar organization could facilitate the initiation of these services and meet the health care needs of the community.

Goal 5: Enhance Support for Community-Based Organizations and Educational Institutions

One of the keys to the long term success of a Diamond Square revival rests with a significant renewed commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for all residents. Whether it is supporting the Emma Jewel Charter Academy, the Alliance for Neighborhood Restoration, the Police Athletic League, the Boys & Girls Club, Eastern Florida State College, or any of the other organization that have as part of their mission the education of youth or adults, significant new efforts for partnering must be a priority. The new Emma Jewel Charter Academy, located in the former Monroe High School facility, offers an option other than the public school system for kindergarten through seventh grade and is free for students to attend. The school is committed to the goal of bettering the community through a health and wellness curriculum. The success of the school and the continued involvement of the other education organizations will strengthen community pride and identity by giving a positive focus on upgrading educational options, including health and wellness, for all neighborhood residents.

Objective 5.1 – Safe Routes to School/Pedestrian Network

Vital to school attendance is a pedestrian network that allows students safe access to schools located in the Diamond Square community. Creating a pedestrian network linking Emma Jewel Charter Academy, Ronald McNair Magnet Middle School, and other schools in the area to surrounding neighborhoods and recreational facilities should be a goal of the Diamond Square, the City and community partners. More kids with safe routes to school means fewer busses are needed, which can add up to a huge annual cost savings for the district. Kids that are able to get themselves to school also means they are not dependent on what could be a parent without a car or a parent with job obligations that interfere with school drop off and pick up times, and are therefore more likely to have higher attendance. As shown above, roundabouts having fewer potential conflict points between cars and pedestrians than a typical intersection, thus enhancing pedestrian safety. Roundabouts also require careful attention to navigate, so drivers reduce their speeds and become more aware when making their way through roundabouts. Roundabouts can be a useful tool in making Diamond Square streets safer for schoolchildren. Well maintained sidewalks and major intersection crossings will allow safe transit and would also enhance the surrounding neighborhoods. Gaps and deficiencies in the sidewalk network should be identified and prioritized.

Objective 5.2 – Partnership with Brevard Health Alliance (or Others)

Cocoa is what can be referred to as a healthcare desert. As indicated above, there is no readily available healthcare for residents, aside from a local neighborhood-based pharmacy. The lack of local healthcare is even more of an issue due to an aging population that is not as mobile as other segments of the community and may not be able to drive themselves out of town for appointments. In addition, while there is public transit available, the routes are not comprehensive and can be time consuming as well as cumbersome. Brevard Health Alliance (BHA) is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides health care services regardless of ability to pay. Brevard Health Alliance offers services from feeding the homeless to general preventative care to dental visits. BHA is a unique partnership between Health First, Wuesthoff, Parrish Medical Center, Brevard County Government and Federal Funding designed to improve

the health of all Brevard County Citizens. These partnerships may be grown or developed in other ways to further benefit the Diamond Square community.

Objective 5.3- Role Model and Mentoring Programs

One of the most influential ways to ensure student success is to establish a role modeling or mentoring program. Brevard County Public Schools offer a Mentoring Program through the District. Schools with actively-engaged mentors have seen positive changes in student performance and behavior. Mentoring also enables residents of Cocoa to feel connected to their community by getting involved with the youth. Local church and civic groups could also provide role model programs to assist in character development with students and other young adults. Role models can assist with anger management strategies, personal finances and even job hunting techniques.

Goal 6: Establish a Community-based Committee Composed of Representatives of a Diverse Cross Section of the Community in Order to Coordinate Activities within the Community and Assist in Building Non-Profit Organization Capacity.

Establishing a broad based organization should be considered to oversee the growth of the Diamond Square CRA in the context of the City of Cocoa and its neighborhoods. This organization would be responsible for addressing partners needed to make progress on the framework initiatives laid out by this plan update. Habitat for Humanity, the Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa, City of Cocoa, Brevard County, the Church Alliance, and educational groups would be just the start of the list of partners needed to make a positive change for the future of Cocoa. The organization would work with the Diamond Square CRA Board who would ultimately be responsible for plan prioritization and implementation. The new broad based organization would work to leverage any partnerships and resources available to Diamond Square in the context of the regional community. The creation of the broad based organization would give Diamond Square another voice and another board of champions for change. The following is a list of potential partners and the various initiative categories with which they may be associated:

- Housing Authority of the City of Cocoa : residential enhancements/sites for redevelopment
- Habitat for Humanity: new home ownership
- Alliance for Neighborhood Restoration: youth activities/workforce skills
- Emma Jewel Charter Academy: academics/civics/life skills
- Church Alliance: sports/mentoring/youth activities
- Healthcare Provider: clinic/nutrition
- Eastern Florida State College: continuing education/workforce skills
- PAL/ANR/Boys & Girls Clubs: afterschool activities/tutoring/life skills
- City of Cocoa: infrastructure/community center/parks programming
- Brevard County: community center/parks programming
- Non-profit Civic Groups: tree plantings/cleanup campaigns/community center/senior programs

Diamond Square CRA Goals and Objectives

1. Community Living to improve the quality, aesthetics, and availability of housing in Diamond Square. Support homeownership and diversity in housing types. The objectives includes the following:
 - Expand and promote the Residential Paint and Beautification grants and programs using targeted marketing efforts for residential properties programs, particularly those located on major corridors such as King Street, Barbara Jenkins Dr, and Rosa L. Jones Drive.
 - Increase awareness of housing assistance programs through community outreach and local partnerships (e.g., leveraging churches and community organizations).
 - Expand homeownership assistance programs to provide pathways to homeownership for low- and moderate-income residents.
 - Incentivize infill development and the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels for multifamily housing throughout the CRA.
 - Expand partnerships with affordable housing developers to increase the stock of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing.
 - Facilitate where possible the development of missing middle housing (townhomes, duplexes, live-work units) to accommodate a range of household sizes and income levels.
 - Increase the enforcement of Code Compliance for all properties, including residential.
 - Upgrade bus stop facilities with new shelters, benches, bike racks, and signage to improve comfort and access to public transportation.
 - Work with the Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) to improve bus service frequency and coverage within the CRA, especially for underserved areas.
2. Community Places to enhance parks and public spaces to create safe, inclusive, vibrant gathering and recreational areas. Objectives includes the following:
 - Further enhance Provost Park and Gilmore Community Park with additional amenities, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and sports facilities.

- Partner with local organizations and businesses to create regular community programming (e.g., farmers markets, outdoor movie nights, and music events).
 - Apply CPTED principles to public spaces, focusing on improving lighting, visibility, and property maintenance.
 - Plant more street trees and expand urban greenery to reduce the urban heat island effect and improve air quality.
3. Community Connections to enhance mobility through consistent and incremental improvements to non-vehicular transportation options to foster a culture of active mobility and ensure access to safe, efficient transportation for all residents. The objective of this goal includes the following:
- Implement "Complete Streets" design features to improve walkability and safety by mending gaps in the sidewalk network, refreshing the landscaping and crosswalks, and installing decorative lighting and gateway features along major corridors including King Street, Barbara Jenkins Drive, Rosa L. Jones Drive, Fiske Boulevard, and Peachtree Street.
 - Upgrade bus stop facilities with new shelters, benches, bike racks, and signage to improve comfort and access to public transportation.
 - Work with the Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) to improve bus service frequency and coverage within the CRA, especially for underserved areas.
4. Community Identity to strengthen community identity and pride by celebrating the neighborhood's history and culture, investing to create a safer, healthier environment, and integrating support services benefiting the community members. The following is a list of objectives pertaining to this goal:
- Create a cohesive branding strategy for placemaking and wayfinding purposes. Concurrently, integrate public art, cultural signage, and historical markers, celebrating the neighborhood's rich history and cultural assets.
 - Increase neighborhood watch programs and engage local residents in community policing efforts to reduce crime.
 - Foster partnerships within the CRA to host clean-up volunteering opportunities on a regular basis to support local accountability and pride.
 - Advocate for the return of culturally significant and age inclusive events such as the MLK and Juneteenth festivals.

- Strengthen partnerships with local nonprofits and community organizations to provide support for youth programs, homelessness services, and senior assistance.
 - Increase programming that engage all age groups in positive activities that foster a sense of belonging and connectedness.
 - Provide health and wellness programming in community centers and public spaces, focusing on physical and mental health.
 - Explore the establishment of a neighborhood organization to help activate the community and keep them informed.
5. Community Opportunity to foster economic growth by developing vacant and underutilized properties, attracting diverse business and amenities, enhancing major corridors to become vibrant, mixed-use commercial districts, and providing job training and development opportunities for residents. The objectives of this goal are as follows:
- Provide storefront and signage improvement grants and the corresponding technical assistance to help existing businesses upgrade their properties and attract customers.
 - Enforce property maintenance standards and provide technical assistance to business owners to improve the upkeep of commercial properties.
 - Partner with schools, businesses, and workforce development organizations to provide job training, skill -building programs, and access to higher paying jobs.
 - Prioritize business attraction strategies that focus on the desired mix of retail, dining, healthcare, and other services, such as grocery stores and medical facility.
 - Invest in stormwater management infrastructure, such as bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable paving, particularly in flood-prone areas.
 - Explore opportunities to underground utilities and implement green infrastructure solutions to enhance environmental resilience.
 - Explore opportunities for a small business/entrepreneurship incubator program that provides mentorship, studio space, and/or funding.